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Library School

Report of the A. L. A. Committee on
Standards of Library Training.

The Committee, composed of six persons, has been obliged to do all its work by correspondence, with the disadvantages that that implies. The chairman, as a means of starting discussion, has assumed certain standards to be desirable, and sent them out to be debated in writing. Various differences of opinion have come to light, and it is a question whether it can make unanimous recommendation on some points.

Entrance requirements. The subject of entrance requirements for admission to the established winter schools was first discussed. One member expressed no opinion, and the remainder of the committee were ready to agree on two or three years' work beyond high school graduation, two members preferring three years of college, and three preferring to set the requirement at two years. Literature, history, and foreign languages were suggested as the predominant subjects in college-preparation for the work, while two of the committee expressed a desire to include economics and natural science, particularly physics, and while no one of the committee objected to an examination for entrance, in lieu of the college residence requirement, one member desired questions in economics and natural science to be included in this examination. All five who discussed the requirements laystress on personal fitness for library work, though one member thinks this can only be learned by trial.

For summer library schools, the committee unanimously recommend as an entrance requirement that the applicant hold a paid position as librarian or library assistant, or a definite written appointment to a library position. Two members favor an educational requirement in addition, such as the completion of a high school

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course or its equivalent.

For entrance to an apprentice-class, when apprentices are trained with the probability and expectation of being employed by other libraries, four of the committee recommend two years of college work, including fifteen hours weekly of literature and history, two being willing to substitute a test by examination, and one of these suggesting the subjects as general literature, history, and current events.

For entrance to correspondence courses, four members of the committee considered it absolutely necessary that the applicant should have a paid position as librarian, or library assistant, or a definite written appointment to a library position. The remaining members disapprove altogether of correspondence courses.

Instruction.

Recommendations as to instructions for library schools:

1. That at least one third of the school instructors have been trained in a recognized library school.
2. That at least one third of the instructors shall have had experience in other libraries than that connected with the school. (one member suggests recent experience, but this would seem to be impracticable.)
3. One member of the committee feels strongly that one-half the instructors should give their entire time to the school, another suggests that one-third of the faculty should be the proportion, while two think that the instructors should have regular library duties, in addition to their work as teachers. A fifth member believes that "instructors are better instructors if they keep in close touch with practical library work." This might be accomplished, it would seem, without being subject to the embarrassing limitations of library hours and assigned duties, and the chairman does not know on which side to count this opinion.

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4. That for laboratory work there be at least one instructor to every ten students. Recommended by the only members who discussed the point.

5. Three members recommend that at least one-fifth sixth of the student's time be given to actual work in the library connected with the school, or in some other where it can be supervised by the school.

For summer library schools.

1. Recommended that at least one person in the corps of instructors shall have been trained in a library school. Not discussed ~~by~~ at all by four members.

2. That at least two persons in the corps of instructors shall have had experience in other libraries than the one connected with the school. Not discussed by four members.

3. That there be at least one instructor to every fifteen students. Not discussed by four.

4. That at least one-fourth of the work for beginners, entering the school on appointment to a position, be practical library work. While this was thought desirable, two of the committee doubted if it were practicable.

For apprentice classes.

1. Recommended that the apprentice shall receive instruction as well as be allowed to practice in the library offering the apprenticeship. Three members did not discuss this.

2. That this instruction be in all departments of the library's work, except the administration. Not discussed by four.

3. That the course be not less than six months in length and the time spent in instruction and practice not less than twenty-four hours weekly. Not discussed by four.

4. That at least one-half hour each day be devoted to a course of re-

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quired reading. Not discussed.

5. That each instructor possess the knowledge, the natural fitness, training and experience which shall make him or her fully competent to teach the subject undertaken. *Suggested by one of the Committee.* Not discussed by four.

It should be said that one member thought the committee had no jurisdiction to fix standards for apprentice-classes, as being an affair of the individual library; and the chairman would, therefore, call attention again to the fact that only such apprentice-classes are included as are taught with a view to securing positions in other libraries.

Tests and credentials.

For library schools.

Recommended that a certificate or diploma be given at the end of the course, which shall certify only to the satisfactory completion of the course and fulfillment of tests; not to fitness for library work, which should be a question referred to the school in the individual case, for recommendation. It was agreed that a graduate might be likely to succeed in some lines and not in others, and that very few can be guaranteed at the outset.

Three members were convinced of the necessity of this caution, two thought the fact should be taken for granted.

It should be stated that the sixth member of the committee, Mr. Anderson, had withdrawn by the time this question, and the following were sent on their rounds.

For summer schools.

That a pass-card, rather than a certificate, be given to the librarian or assistant who has satisfactorily done the work of the course and fulfilled tests. If different work is taken each summer, the pass-cards may come in time to amount to a full-course certificate.

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Two members preferred the pass-card, two had no objection to the certificate, while the fifth member thought that whatever form was used - that being sometimes decided by the institution with which the summer school was connected - this form should plainly state that it was a summer school course. To this, the committee as a whole would subscribe, I think.

For apprentice-classes.

No certificate or general letter, but a specific letter when the applicant becomes a candidate for a given position.

Three members agreed on this, the other two doubting in general if the committee has any right to deal with the subject of apprentice-classes.

Minimum number send list of subjects for which certificate or diploma should be given.

It was the belief of three of the committee that some minimum should be agreed on, and of all that the committee's present report was not the place. ^{however}
The list submitted to the committee for discussion was as follows:

For library schools:

Classification (Decimal.

(Expansive.

Cataloguing (Classed

(Dictionary.

(Accession work

(Shelf-listing

Library economy (Loan systems

(Binding and rebinding

(Supplies and statistics

(Order work.

Reference work (lectures and practical problems.

Bibliography, trade.

Book selection.

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For summer library schools.

Same, except classed cataloguing and expansive classification.

A pass-card to show which subjects were completed in any one summer.

For apprentice classes.

Same as for summer-schools, with the exception of trade bibliography and book-selection.

These exceptions were made in the case of the summer schools and apprentice-classes, not because they were not considered desirable, but because in so short a time it seemed impossible to do justice to so many subjects, and these seemed to be the ones for which the library assistant taking a short course would have least use.

As the association will see there is unanimity on almost nothing, which shows two things, first, that the library schools are themselves somewhat uncertain as yet as to the necessary foundations of their work, and second, that it is time thought was being given to the subject. The committee would be glad to assist as individuals, as far as may be, in the work of fixing standards, but as a committee begs to be discharged.

It would call attention to the recommendation made at Niagara that a standing committee be formed of eight persons, selected from specified fields of library work, to report regularly each year on all known sources of library training. As the number eight would make this action unconstitutional (only five being allowed by the by-laws) and as eight persons seem necessary to cover the required library relationships, the committee suggests that section 6 of the by-laws be suspended, and authority granted to the executive committee to appoint a committee of eight in accordance with the recommendation made by the committee at Niagara.

Signed for
the Committee

Mary W. Plummer -
Chairman

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